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(Continued.)

She dried her nervously moist hands with her handkerchief. She tried to speak, but words would not come forth from the lips that moved. The woman of steel nerves who had excited admiration and comment at the opening of the trial now seemed verging on transformation to a physical wreck with pained tongue.

"I will repeat the question," began the prosecutor, hoping to relieve the strain of the deep silence prevailing throughout the woman's ordeal.

But no. By a tremendous effort she pulled herself together, looked straight into the attorney's eyes and started, though in broken tones at the beginning, to tell what she knew of and had seen in the moments of the consummation of the crime that had shocked a continent.

"You need not repeat that—that question," she quickly said. "I will answer it fully. On the night in question I entered the library of my home, and—ah—the telephone bell—was ringing."

Again she paused. Her cheeks, her hands and her forehead twitched nervously as sometimes they do in an epileptic attack. She groped as though blindly for a bottle of smelling salts which she carried in a gold mesh bag. The queer strong thread of mental reserve and physical power had worn too thin to stand the strain. It snapped.

The woman fell back in the witness chair in a swoon as she gasped feebly, "Water, water," and the court attendants jumped to her aid.

After all, there was no just cause to wonder at the unexpected collapse of Joan Trask on the witness stand. Few people there are who could have endured what she had endured without emerging from the test if they came out of it at all—without either health of mind vitally impaired. Years of suspense and of sacrificing for another things most dear to a true woman's heart had but ill prepared her to face the merciless prosecutor of a notorious murder trial, even though the silent victim whose blood demanded vengeance had been the man she had loved as husband.

What was it about that telephone call on the night of the slaying of Gerald Trask which, when on the stand the first day of the trial, caused her to faint at its mention?

What was there about that talk over the wire that broke down her reserve, self contained demeanor and determined poise when questioned about it by the prosecutor, when even poignant reminders of her husband's death had failed to materially move her?

What was the mystery?

Undoubtedly the prosecutor knew through her statements before the trial, began and by her testimony at the coroner's inquest and in the grand juryroom.

The public, aroused to a still higher pitch of excitement over the case, awaited impatiently the resumption of Mrs. Trask's testimony. The trial postponed for a day owing to her spectacular breakdown on the witness stand, was continued at 10:30 a. m., a day later, with Joan Trask again appearing in the role of central figure. Her eyes were clear; her voice was steady. She had conquered the weakness that had overpowered her. She had resolved to go through to the end with the part she had been called on by the authorities to fill.

And then the public began to learn as much of the inner details of the tragedy as the district attorney's official knew. The woman bared her heart to a gaping, thoughtless multitude that fed its morbid mind on the sorrow with the greed of a hydra-headed vampire. A heyday for the cynics and the scandal mongers was the case of the people versus Robert Strickland, and they were not to be robbed of any choice morsel of the prey, No, indeed!

Now let us consider just what manner of a story it was that Joan Trask told in those soul trying hours during which she occupied the witness chair in Justice Dinsmore's tribunal.

She had heard the telephone bell in her husband's library ring as she entered the house on her return from a dinner given by a friend in honor of the wife of one of the members of a foreign embassy who had been visiting in the city. Knowing her husband to be out for the evening, she entered the library and answered the call.

The instrument was affixed to an ornate mahogany desk of modern design standing at the left of the room, a short space in front of an alcove and a few feet distant from a safe in which Trask kept valuable papers, some family heirlooms and from time to time bundles of stocks and bonds and sums of money. He frequently used large amounts of cash in his transactions at home, she testified.

A woman's voice answered when Mrs. Trask asked what was wanted, a voice that Mrs. Trask was certain that she had heard before. At any rate, she had a faint suspicion as to who was the owner of the voice—nothing definite.

"Is this 182 River?" came the query. "Yes," replied the financier's widow, who started to the court that she had trembled visibly at the sound of the voice.

A further request to be allowed to talk to Mr. Trask was met by the response that he was not in.

"When will he be home?" "I don't know," asked the communicant.

"Who are you?" asked the communicant.

"I'm his wife," was Mrs. Trask's answer.

"There was a pause.

"Oh, very well. Goodbye," came next, and the strange woman rang off.

Mrs. Trask turned away from the telephone, deeply distressed, almost distraught. As she did so her husband's secretary, Stanley Glover, came into the library rather hurriedly.

"I thought I heard the telephone ring," he explained.

His manner impressed Mrs. Trask as being marked by extreme anxiety and especially so when she informed him that she had answered the call.

Replying to his urgent questioning, Mrs. Trask told him that it was "A

woman, as usual," who had sought to communicate with her husband.

The secretary seated himself at his employer's desk and appeared to desire to avoid the woman's gaze.

Suspecting that Glover knew something about the person, Mrs. Trask pressed him with questions, but to all he stated that he knew absolutely nothing.

Mrs. Trask became somewhat contemptuous in her attitude.

"No, I suppose my husband doesn't take his secretary into his confidence to that extent, although he doesn't make any great attempt to keep things secret. He hasn't even a sense of shame."

Glover protested.

"You must excuse me. You know my position, Mrs. Trask."

"Yes, of course. I don't ordinarily discuss these things, but even my endurance has its limits. I've put up with things for fifteen years now. Oh, what a fool I am to stand for it!"

"My dear Mrs. Trask," protested the secretary.

"Yes, forgive me. It was wrong of me to talk about it to you. Sometimes I lose patience. Well, we won't say anything more about it. Is Mr. Trask coming home tonight?"

"Yes; he telephoned this morning. He's coming on the 9:40 from Long Branch. It's half past 9 now. He should have been here by this time."

"I can't imagine what he's doing down there these two days."

"Golfing and fishing, I suppose."

"He might have waited until next week," Mrs. Trask said. "We'll be here all summer. By the way, I'd like you to go over my tradesman's accounts for me before we leave the city."

"I'll do it at once. Where are the books?" was Glover's reply.

"In the safe," Mrs. Trask informed him.

It was just as Mrs. Trask had informed Glover that she would get the combination of the safe from her husband and give it to him that the sound of familiar footsteps was heard in the vestibule, a key was heard to scratch and turn in the lock of the cumbersome front door and in strode Gerald Trask.

The financier's eyes sparkled animatedly. His step and bearing were buoyant. He seemed this embodiment of health and energy and life and breadth of forth the atmosphere of the enjoyment of them all as he walked forward to greet his wife.

Stanley Glover, Secretary to Gerald Trask.

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Yet it was the night of June 24, 1915.

The hour was that between 9 and 10.

Gerald Trask might have borne himself differently had he known what the wheel of events was whirling toward him at that hour, at that very moment.

But he did not know—he did not know.

"Hello, Joan! Hello, Glover!" was the greeting of the financier as he stepped forward.

On the part of the private secretary was seen the curious mixture of obsequiousness which marks the employee who is at once the servant and the confidant of his employer. There was evident perturbation in his manner, as that of one who was oppressed perhaps by a secret of his own. But there was plainly apparent, in addition, the great desire to please.

Glover stood in parous case. Without willing it he had been forced to witness the outbreak of a wife against her husband, and that husband the man on whom his own prosperity depended. Not knowing what might be future developments in the relations between Mr. and Mrs. Trask he must perforce maintain a discreet distance between the two.

"Good evening, Mr. Trask," was his greeting to the man who entered. But the wife who had voiced but a few moments before her dissatisfaction with her husband's conduct did not reply to his "Hello."

Her silence was noticeable. Turning to her, Trask, with a mixture of cynicism and contempt, asked:

"Well, what's wrong with you again?"

The disdainful "again," implying that the man had in mind their long course of disagreement, stung the woman to the quick. It looked as though there would be a stormy scene, and Glover took hold of the edge of the desk with both hands as if to brace himself against the gathering storm.

With an effort Mrs. Trask controlled herself, and she turned away with a brief "Nothing."

"Oh, is that all?" replied Trask, and then Stanley Glover, again the suave, cool, collected private secretary, his tension relaxed, stepped into the breach.

"Allow me," he said, stepping to the side of Trask and taking his hat and overcoat. He deposited them on a chair.

"Anything new, Glover?" asked Trask.

"No, sir," replied Glover.

Throughout the scene the telephone call from "the other woman" had been

William F. Walker, former New Britain bank cashier who embezzled \$620,000 and was paroled after serving seven years of a 10-year sentence left the state prison at Hartford.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT, ss. PROBATE COURT.

December 2, 1915.

Estate of James P. Casey, late of the town of Bridgeport, in said district deceased.

The Court of Probate for the District of Bridgeport, hath limited and allowed six months from the date hereof for Creditors of said Estate to exhibit their claims for settlement. Those who neglect to present their accounts, properly attested, within said time, will be debarred a recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate are requested to make immediate payment to

JOHN H. TAQUE, Administrator.

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